

Numenius phaeopus (Whimbrel)

Priority 2 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

Class: Aves (Birds)

Order: Charadriiformes (Plovers, Sandpipers, And Allies)

Family: Scolopacidae (Curlews, Dowitchers, Godwits, Knots, Phalaropes, Sandpipers, Snipe, Yellowlegs, And Woodcock)

General comments:

In Maine, less than 1,000 individuals, found at fewer than 12 sites, threats to habitats throughout range, and regional population declines. Whimbrels given "watch list" status by U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Partnership in Shorebirds of Conservation Concern in the U. S. - 2015. (Andres et al 2015).

Species Conservation Range Maps for Whimbrel:

Town Map: [Numenius phaeopus Towns.pdf](#)

Subwatershed Map: [Numenius phaeopus_HUC12.pdf](#)

SGCN Priority Ranking - Designation Criteria:

Risk of Extirpation: NA

State Special Concern or NMFS Species of Concern:

Numenius phaeopus is listed as a species of Special Concern in Maine.

Recent Significant Declines: NA

Regional Endemic: NA

High Regional Conservation Priority:

United States Shorebird Conservation Plan:

Species of High Concern

North Atlantic Regional Shorebird Plan:

Highly Imperiled

United States Birds of Conservation Concern:

Bird of Conservation Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 14 and/or 30: Yes

High Climate Change Vulnerability:

Vulnerability: 3, Confidence: Medium, Reviewers: 3

Understudied rare taxa: NA

Historical: NA

Culturally Significant: NA

Habitats Assigned to Whimbrel:

Formation Name Agricultural

Macrogroup Name Agricultural

Habitat System Name: Cultivated Crops **Notes:** blueberry barrens primary

Formation Name Cliff & Rock

Macrogroup Name Rocky Coast

Habitat System Name: Acadian-North Atlantic Rocky Coast

Habitat System Name: North Atlantic Cobble Shore

Formation Name Intertidal

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Gravel Shore

Habitat System Name: High Intertidal

Habitat System Name: Lower Intertidal

Habitat System Name: Mid-Intertidal

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Formation Name Intertidal

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Mudflat

Habitat System Name: Non-Vascular Mudflat

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Sandy Shore

Habitat System Name: Sand Beach

Habitat System Name: Sand Flat

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Tidal Marsh (peat-forming)

Habitat System Name: Acadian Coastal Salt Marsh

Habitat System Name: Coastal Plain Tidal Marsh

Stressors Assigned to Whimbrel:

Stressor Priority Level based on Severity and Actionability	Moderate Severity		High Severity	
	Highly Actionable		Medium-High	
	Moderately Actionable		Medium	
	Actionable with Difficulty		Low	

IUCN Level 1 Threat Biological Resource Use

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Fishing and Harvesting of Aquatic Resources

Severity: Moderate Severity

Actionability: Highly actionable

Notes: Activities in the intertidal areas can impact habitat and behavior.

IUCN Level 1 Threat Other Options

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Lack of knowledge

Severity: Moderate Severity

Actionability: Highly actionable

Notes: Information on population status, pre migration body condition, and importance of blueberry barrens to staging whimbrels in Maine is lacking. Knowledge of potential impacts to migrating whimbrels from hazing and disturbance occurring on commercial blueberry lands is lacking.

IUCN Level 1 Threat Agriculture and Aquaculture

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Annual and Perennial Non-timber crops

Severity: Moderate Severity

Actionability: Moderately actionable

Notes: Impacts from disturbance and contaminants during commercial blueberry harvest may be minimized through outreach and environmental permit review.

IUCN Level 1 Threat Pollution

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Industrial and Military Effluents

Severity: Moderate Severity

Actionability: Moderately actionable

Notes: Impacts from oil and chemical spills can be mitigated through regulation and compensation. Prevention can occur through contingency planning and environmental permit review.

IUCN Level 1 Threat Residential and Commercial Development

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Housing and Urban Areas

Severity: Moderate Severity

Actionability: Moderately actionable

Notes: Habitat loss from development can be minimized through environmental permit review.

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Notes: Habitat loss from sea level rise and impacts to invertebrate prey base from ocean acidification may occur.
Conservation of upland habitats may allow intertidal areas to migrate inland as sea level rise occurs.

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Temperature Extremes**Severity:** Severe**Actionability:** Actionable with difficulty

Notes: Increasing ocean temperatures may impact invertebrate prey base.

Species Level Conservation Actions Assigned to Whimbrel:

**Only species specific conservation actions that address high (red) or medium-high (orange) priority stressors are summarized here.*

Conservation Action	Category: Research	Biological Priority: high	Type: new
Determine population status, pre migration body condition, and importance of commercial blueberry barrens to staging whimbrels.			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Annual and Perennial Non-timber crops

Conservation Action	Category: Research	Biological Priority: high	Type: new
Determine potential impacts from hazing and disturbance occurring on commercial blueberry barrens			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Annual and Perennial Non-timber crops

Conservation Actions Associated with the Shorebirds Guild:

Conservation Action	Category: Survey and Monitoring	Biological Priority: high	Type: on-going
Identify and map priority feeding and roosting areas including offshore habitats, and implement protection initiatives. Enter data in IFW ETSC database.			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge, Industrial and Military Effluents, Housing and Urban Areas, Tourism and Recreational Areas, Commercial and Industrial Areas

Conservation Action	Category: Species Management	Biological Priority: high	Type: new
Place symbolic stake and twine fencing around important beach roosting areas with signage to identify roosting areas.			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities, Tourism and Recreational Areas

Conservation Action	Category: Research	Biological Priority: high	Type: on-going
Work with the Maine Department of Marine Resources to conduct research to determine the impact of macroalgae harvest on wintering waterfowl			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Fishing and Harvesting of Aquatic Resources

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Conservation Action	Category: Public Outreach	Biological Priority: high	Type: on-going
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Provide outreach to pet owners, beachgoers, kayakers, beach managers, and landowners to raise public awareness on shorebirds and on the impacts of disturbance from recreational activities in coastal areas.

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

Conservation Action	Category: Habitat Management	Biological Priority: moderate	Type: new
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Use voluntary agreements, conservation easements, conservation tax abatements and incentives to protect important habitats

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Work and Other Activities, Recreational Activities, Housing and Urban Areas, Commercial and Industrial Areas

Conservation Action	Category: Survey and Monitoring	Biological Priority: high	Type: on-going
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To determine population status continue monitoring program for SGCN shorebird species at high priority migration sites coastwide. Continue to coordinate with ISS, PRISM, Atlantic Flyway ESMP programs.

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Conservation Action	Category: Research	Biological Priority: high	Type: on-going
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Identify prey resources in significant staging areas to determine potential limiting factors and optimal management techniques to promote these resources.

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Conservation Action	Category: Research	Biological Priority: high	Type: on-going
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Determine length of stay at stopover areas, site fidelity, local movements and premigration condition to determine if coastal habitats are meeting shorebird requirements for successful migration.

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Conservation Action	Category: Research	Biological Priority: moderate	Type: new
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Determine limiting factors for SGCN shorebird species on breeding, migratory, or wintering areas.

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Conservation Action	Category: Research	Biological Priority: high	Type: on-going
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Gain a better understanding of the extent and impacts of algae harvesting on staging and wintering shorebirds. Conduct longterm monitoring of ecosystem-wide impacts of cutting algae to determine potential impacts to shorebird habitats and invertebrate pr

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Fishing and Harvesting of Aquatic Resources

Broad Taxonomic Group Conservation Actions:

Additional relevant conservation actions for this species are assigned within broader taxonomic groups in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-1.

Habitat Based Conservation Actions:

Additional conservation actions that may benefit habitat(s) associated with this species can be found in Maine's 2015 Wildlife

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Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-15. Click on the Habitat Grouping of interest to launch a habitat based report summarizing relevant conservation actions and associated SGCN.

The Wildlife Action Plan was developed through a lengthy participatory process with state agencies, targeted conservation partners, and the general public. The Plan is non-regulatory. The species, stressors, and voluntary conservation actions identified in the Plan complement, but do not replace, existing work programs and priorities by state agencies and partners.